

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 AGR-05 OFA-01 STR-04

EPA-01 OES-03 CEQ-01 FEA-01 INT-05 FAA-00 DOTE-00

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SUBJ: GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

1. GOVERNOR GENERAL SIR MILO BUTLER DELIVERED THE ANNUAL SPEECH FROM THE THRONE AT THE JANUARY 28 OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. PROBABLY MOST NOTABLE WERE THE GOVERNMENT'S EMPHASIS ON ENCOURAGEMENT TO TOURISM, INVESTMENT AND AGRICULTURAL AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT. ALSO TOUCHED UPON IN THE SPEECH, WERE THE NEW DEFENSE FORCE, EDUCATION, WATER SUPPLIES, THE NEED FOR MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION, AND LEGISLATION DEALING WITH FLAGS OF CONVENIENCE AND OFFSHORE OIL EXPLORATION AND POLLUTION CONTROL.

2. PROMISING TO OPEN NEW OUTLETS FOR TOURISM, SIR MILO SAID THAT EMPHASIS WOULD BE PLACED ON DEVELOPING THE EUROPEAN SECTOR OF THE MARKET AND IMPROVING ATTITUDES AND FACILITIES. CONCERNING THE LATTER, HE PROMISED IMPROVEMENTS OF OUT ISLANDS AIRSTRIPS AND ADDITIONAL FACILITIES AT NASSAU

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AIRPORT (E.G., STERILE AREA, EXTENSION OF COVERED WALKWAY,

ENLARGEMENT OF PRECLEARANCE AND DEPARTURE AREA, NEW FENCING AND AN AIRPORT POLICE STATION). ALSO PROMISED SHORTLY WAS AN ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE CABLE BEACH COMPLEX, WHERE, HE SAID, PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE.

3. REFERRING TO "HIGH PRIORITY" GIVEN TO AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT, SIR MILO CLAIMED THAT START OF BAHAMAS DEVELOPMENT BANK IN 1976 WOULD PROVIDE MEANS OF MOBILIZING FUNDS TO THIS END AND THAT COOPERATION BETWEEN THAT BANK AND BAHAMAS AGRICULTURAL CORP. WOULD PROVIDE FARMERS AND FISHERMEN WITH ACCESS TO FUNDS FOR COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL VENTURES. LAND WILL BE LEASED AND CREDIT MADE AVAILABLE FOR EQUIPMENT. FISHERMEN, HE SAID, WOULD HAVE "EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT" OF GOVERNMENT, WITH ATTENTION BEING GIVEN TO CONSTRUCTION OF FISH HANDLING PLANTS AT NASSAU AND ON OUT ISLANDS. SIR MILO REITERATED THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF RESERVING THE FISHING RESOURCES OF THE BAHAMAS EXCLUSIVELY FOR BAHAMIANS. THE GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, "WILL RESIST EFFORTS FROM EVERY QUARTER TO FRUSTRATE WHAT IT REGARDS AS THE LEGITIMATE CLAIM OF THE BAHAMIAN PEOPLE."

4. ALMOST AS CLEAR-CUT WAS THE PARTING PROMISE TO "CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE INVESTMENT IN THE BAHAMAS CONSONANT WITH NATIONAL GOALS AND PRIORITIES" AND TO "DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ASSIST THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS LOCATED IN THE BAHAMAS . . ."

5. EMBASSY COMMENT:

A. WHILE SPEECH CONTAINED NO SURPRISES IT WAS NOTABLE FOR OPENING WARM REFERENCE AND SALUTE TO U.S. BICENTENNIAL OFFERING GREETINGS TO THE BAHAMAS' "FRIENDLY NEIGHBOR."

B. INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH, NEITHER IN AFOREMENTIONED REFERENCE TO U.S. OR IN COMMENTS ON NEED FOR DEFENSE FORCE WAS ANY REFERENCE MADE TO BASE NEGOTIATIONS.

C. DETAILED LISTING OF AIRPORT IMPROVEMENTS SOUNDED VERY MUCH LIKE SPECIFIC LIST WHICH EMBASSY HAS ACTIVELY BEEN PRESSING UPON GCOB. HOPEFULLY THIS SIGNALS SOME ACTION -- BUT WE ARE NOT HOLDING OUR BREATH.

D. GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT ON FISHING SEEMED TO EMBASSY CLEARLY DIRECTED AT CUBANS AND WAS DESIGNED TO DISPEL ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DOUBTS THAT CUBA (OR U.S.) MAY HAVE REGARDING CONCESSIONS TO FORMER ON FISHING FOR BAHAMIAN LOBSTER.

E. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, REFERENCE TO ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT WAS DOUBTLESS AN ATTEMPT TO DISPEL CONSIDERABLE DISQUIETUDE STEMMING FROM EARLIER PLP ECONOMIC POLICY STATEMENTS. EMBASSY BELIEVES MUCH MORE WILL BE NEEDED ON THIS SCORE BEFORE BUSINESS COMMUNITY WILL BE REASSURED AS TO GOVERNMENT'S CONSTANCY IN ATTITUDE TOWARD EXTERNAL INVESTMENT AS WELL AS FAIR SHAKE FOR

MUCH-NEEDED FOREIGN TECHNICAL EXPERTS.

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